



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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RANKING MEMBER
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MEMBER
FINANCE, REVENUE AND BONDING COMMITTEE
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Testimony

In Support of Proposed S.B. No. 427
AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF HAND-HELD MOBILE TELEPHONES AND MOBILE
ELECTRONIC DEVICES BY MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATORS

And

H.B. No. 5474
AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ELECTRONIC TOLLS AT THE STATE'S
BORDERS.

Transportation Committee
March 12, 2010

Dear Chairman DeFronzo, Chairman Guerrera and members of the Transportation Committee:

I am writing in support of SB 427, An Act Concerning The Use Of Hand-Held Mobile Telephones And Mobile Electronic Devices By Motor Vehicle Operators and H.B. No. 5474, An Act Concerning The Establishment Of Electronic Tolls At The State's Borders.

I support both the intent and the content of SB 427. On any given day, we all witness drivers with a phone held up to their ear, causing them to drive too fast, too slow or erratically, especially at intersections. By raising the penalty for hand-held cell phone use by drivers, this will hopefully be the incentive that will compel drivers to use an ear phone, a blue tooth, or some other interactive phone device.

Returning 25% of the fine to municipalities may help increase police enforcement of this law at the local level. I urge the committee to support this bill.

With regard to H.B. 5474, I am a strong proponent of electronic tolls in Connecticut but not if they are located only at Connecticut's border towns.

The language of the bill states the purpose is to raise revenue for the state's special transportation fund, but proposes putting the tolls in the wrong place. Highway tolls are user fees to be paid by inter- and intrastate drivers. The purpose is to charge drivers for the maintenance and construction of the roads they drive on. Toll booths should be sited throughout the state based on traffic numbers, not on the financial or geographic expedience of locating them at border towns only.

Connecticut should have electronic tolls but with the following caveats:

1. Tolls should be collected via the latest version of E-Z Pass so vehicles can pass through the toll at highway speed, not have to slow down and cause congestion at the toll booths.
2. There should be cameras at the toll booths to photograph license plates of vehicles not equipped with E-Z Pass. Bills will then be sent to the registered owner of these vehicles.
3. Tolls should be placed throughout the state, not just at the border towns.
4. All monies collected by the tolls must – by legislation – go to the state's Special Transportation Fund, and cannot be swept into the General Fund.
5. Another purpose of electronic tolls is their use as a congestion mitigation measure. There should be language in the bill that establishes a pilot program to measure higher toll pricing at peak rush hours to determine if this evens out the flow of traffic throughout the day.

I urge the committee to discuss these amendments to H.B. 5474 and incorporate some of these suggestions as well as others you will be hearing today before passing this bill out of committee.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lile R. Gibbons

Lile R. Gibbons
State Representative
150th House District